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Pacific Partnership 2013 Preventive Medicine

Filed under CORPSMAN, FLEET AND THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND DISASTER RELIEF [NO COMMENTS]

By Lt. Cmdr. Lori Christensen, environmental health officer, [U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery](#)



Sailors and a non-governmental organization volunteer sort medication for distribution during Pacific Partnership 2013 aboard the amphibious dock landing ship USS Pearl Harbor (LSD 52). Pacific Partnership is the largest U.S. Navy humanitarian assistance and disaster response-preparation mission in the Indo-Asia-Pacific region. (U.S. Navy photo by Mass Communication Specialist 3rd Class Carlos M. Vazquez II/Released)

I will soon be embarking on what has the potential to be the most exciting three months of my Navy career to date. Leaving the familiar behind, I will go to places I have only read about in history books.

When I had the pleasure of getting to know an officer from the [Papua New Guinea Defense Force](#) during my [Army Medical Service Corps](#) days, I never dreamed that my future would include working in his home country as a Navy Medical Service Corps Officer. That is exactly what happens next Wednesday as I arrive in Papua New Guinea as part [Pacific Partnership 2013](#).

Navy Medicine Video

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Pacific Partnership 2013 began for me in late January when I received a request for forces from Lt. Cmdr. Chad Rees, Plans and Medical Operations Officer, Navy Medicine West. The message was sent to me on a Sunday evening because of my role as the Environmental Health Officer (EHO) community Assistant Specialty Leader (ASL). The request came in for 2 EHOs to deploy with Destroyer Squadron (DESRON) 31 as part of the preventive medicine team for the mission.



Environmental and Preventive Medicine Unit Six in Pearl Harbor, HI. The support from the EHO community and my colleagues at the U.S. Navy Bureau of Medicine and Surgery (BUMED) has been overwhelming. Navy medicine is truly a team and I am so fortunate to be a part of.

Those of us who were assigned in February came into planning that was already well under way. The Pre Deployment Site Survey teams were returning to provide situational awareness and guidance at weekly teleconferences led by the Medical Component Lead for the mission, Capt. Chris Westbrook, Fleet Surgical Team 9, San Diego. I was assigned as the senior Preventive Medicine staffer for the team and began the process of mission preparation in addition to maintaining an already busy schedule in my current position at BUMED.

One of the first decisions that had to be made was to determine which officers would go on each of the three separate ADVON (Advanced Liaison) teams. There were four of us to choose from and the remaining officer would be the Preventive Medicine Officer in Charge on the USS Pearl Harbor. It was determined that I would go on ADVON with the team deploying to Papua New Guinea and the Solomon Islands. This means I will be in country to liaison with the host nation ministries of health and medical teams to determine which activities the shipboard crew will participate in when they disembark.

The main focus of PP13 is to build on pre-existing infrastructure and conduct Subject Matter Expertise Exchanges (SMEEs) to build sustainable projects that can grow and be further developed by future mission teams. It is an exciting opportunity and I am very excited to be able to share it with my Navy colleagues. Also, as it is a partnership mission, we will be working alongside our Australian and New Zealand counterparts.

Stand by for weekly updates and pictures. Next stop, meeting the ADVON team in Hawaii.

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